

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). The purpose of this research is to conduct cognitive interviews to pretest revised mail materials for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS is sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

Beginning in 2018, the NCVS will utilize updated mail materials for outreach with sampled addresses (advance letters, envelopes and two versions of a fact sheet) and respondents (thank-you letters). The Census Bureau's Demographic Statistical Methods Division (DSMD) Survey Methodology (SM) team was tasked with enhancing the mail materials in preparation for the 2018 implementation. The SM team updated the letters and fact sheet based on an expert review of the materials that are currently used. The next step is to conduct cognitive interviews to evaluate how well the revised materials work and to identify any ways they may be improved. In the cognitive interviews, we will assess the clarity and potential effectiveness of the revised materials and identify respondent issues with comprehension or interpretation, with the goal of producing clear, succinct and motivating messages. The results of the cognitive interviews will influence decisions about final content and design of the mail materials.

In May and June 2017, staff from the DSMD SM team will conduct up to fifteen cognitive interviews in the Washington, DC and Raleigh-Durham, NC metropolitan areas. The interviews will be conducted in public locations convenient to participants, such as local libraries and community centers, or at Census Headquarters in Suitland, MD.

The goal of this research is to interview adults from the general U.S. population to assess their understanding of the messages and information presented in the proposed NCVS mail materials. Participants will be screened during the study recruitment to ensure they are likely to receive/open the mail for their household so they are representative of the NCVS target population; those who would receive mail materials that may be sent to their address. Participants will be asked to review the proposed materials for each mailing (advance letters, thank-you letters, envelopes and fact sheets). Participants will be asked to think aloud. We will use retrospective probing to get a full understanding of the participant's thought processes and interpretations of specific terminology and overall messaging of the materials as well as preferences for how information is presented.

To accommodate a short testing period the cognitive interviews will be conducted on a "flow" basis as opposed to employing distinct, separate rounds. This arrangement allows for more frequent feedback with changes being made to the materials (as necessary) in between interviews, as opposed to one set of changes in between two set rounds. A copy of the cognitive interview protocol and the draft NCVS mail materials are included in this package.

All interviews will be audio-recorded to facilitate a summary of the results. Participants will be asked to sign consent forms and give permission to be recorded. A copy of the consent form is attached. All participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential. Participants will receive a \$40 incentive after the interview concludes.

We will use a multi-pronged strategy to recruit participants, such as posting ads on Craigslist, distributing flyers, and using personal networks. While not nationally representative, an attempt will be made to recruit participants with varying demographic characteristics (e.g., sex, education, age, race and ethnicity).

In general, for Census Bureau staff, it requires four screener conversations to recruit one participant. Each screener conversation lasts approximately three minutes. We estimate it will take 3 hours to screen and recruit 15 participants. The estimated duration for each cognitive interview is 1 hour. For 15 participants, the estimated burden for the interviews is 15 hours, bringing the total burden to 18 hours.

In order for us to meet our project deadlines for this work, we request OMB approval no later than May 25, 2017.

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and study design is:

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